



**Minutes of BCA Council Meeting held on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2011  
at Alvechurch Church Hall, Alvechurch**

**Present:**

Andy Eavis (AE)	BCA Chairman / BCA UIS Rep.
David Cooke (DC)	BCA Treasurer / Cave Registry Sec / British Caving Library Rep.
Damian Weare (DW)	BCA Secretary / Handbook Editor
David Judson (DJu)	BCA Legal & Insurance Officer
Graham Mollard (GM)	BCA Training Officer
Les Williams (LW)	BCA Publications & Information Officer / BCA Webmaster
Nick Williams (NW)	BCA Insurance Manager / Equipment & Techniques Officer
Glenn Jones (GJ)	BCA Membership Administrator / CNCC Rep.
Jenny Potts (JP)	BCA Publication Sales / DCA Rep.
James Collings (JC)	BCA Youth & Development Officer
Mike Clayton (MC)	BCA Newsletter Editor
David Jean (DJe)	DCUC Rep.
Mike McCombe (MM)	CCC Rep.
Stephan Natynczuk (SN)	ACI Rep.
Idris Williams (IW)	ASCT Rep.
Steve Holding (SH)	NAMHO Rep.
Alan Finch (AF)	WPCST Rep.
Dave Checkley (DC)	BCRA Rep.
Clark Friend (CF)	Radon Working Party Chairman
Charlie Milton (CM)	Club Rep.: Combined Services CT
Owen Clarke (OC)	Club Rep.: Cwmbran CC
Mick Day (MD)	Individual Member Rep.
Emma Porter (EP)	Individual Member Rep.
Faye Litherland (FL)	Individual Member Rep.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am.

**1. Chairman's Welcome**

AE welcomed members to this Council Meeting.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Bob Mehew, Charlie Milton, Ged Campion, Bernie Woodley, Boyd Potts, Mark Williams, Elsie Little and Chris Jewell.

**3. Applications for Club Membership**

GJ reported an application with correct paperwork and payment from "Leicestershire Scouts Caving Unit".

Proposal: *to accept the "Leicestershire Scouts Caving Unit" as a Member Club.*

Prop: GJ, Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

**4. Minutes of the last Council Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010 (previously circulated)**

Proposal: *to accept the Minutes from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2010 as a true record*

Prop: JP, Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

**5. Matters Arising for the Minutes of the last Council Meeting**

**Review of Action Log**

Action Log 6: DC: Ongoing

Action Log 20: AE: No progress

Action Log 24: CM: No progress

Action Log 29: CJ: Not at meeting – status unknown  
Action Log 34: CJ: Not at meeting – status unknown  
Action Log 36: DW: Ongoing – see Secretary’s Report  
Action Log 38: CM: to be removed and combined with Action 24.  
Action Log 44: JC: Complete – covered under Youth & Development Report  
Action Log 46: GJ: Complete – see Membership Administrator’s Report  
Action Log 47: DC: Complete – see Treasurer’s Report  
Action Log 48: DC: Complete – see Treasurer’s Report  
Action Log 49: GC: Complete  
Action Log 50: EL: Ongoing  
Action Log 51: DW: Complete  
Action Log 52: Various: Still awaiting feedback.

GM: Clarified that he was asking for a list of people who would like to be on a list of people he can pass on as potential “Court-Ready Technical Experts”. Consideration can then be given as to whether it is worth arranging some group training in acting as an expert witness.

LW: Is it beneficial to BCA to have expert witnesses?

OC: Could we be training people in the gap between a case coming up and going to Court.

SN: Is there an insurance issue with BCA being responsible for its expert witnesses?

GM: The expert witnesses are not employed by BCA. Any expert witness should make a specific statement in Court to this effect. When GM acted as an expert witness recently, he made very clear was not there in his capacity as BCA Training Officer.

NW: It is up to people to declare their interests in Court. Not disclosing something might mean a case is endangered.

DJu: Would there be a downside to us having paid for someone’s training?

NW: We would not be liable, though. It is also simply expert opinion that is being given, rather than fact. There is no obligation to have any training, but it is in people’s best interests to be trained.

CF: We need to be pre-emptive rather than reactive.

GM: Does not think BCA should be paying for people’s training.

NW: Agrees. We have more important things to worry about.

AE: What we do need is that experts in Court are beneficial to caving as a whole.

NW: BCA cannot have a position on anything unless BCA has a written document agreed by members. Therefore, BCA would be unlikely to ever be able to express its position on a specific issue in court.

GM: Potential areas of expertise could include: Hydrologists, Explosives users, Diggers, Geologists, divers.

EP: Maybe what we really need is guidelines for how to operate effectively in court.

GM: BMC have a generic training course that we could perhaps latch onto.

DJu: Should we perhaps create the list of names first, then consider the desirability or otherwise of training people afterwards?

DCh: Will raise this at BCRA Council to make scientific experts aware of the list.

Action Log 53: GM: Has written to Constituent Bodies & RCCs. (Appendix 1) Complete.

Action Log 54: NW & DJu: NW has had some further correspondence, and will need to visit SUI. He will probably do so in the next few months. GM: For information GM is currently talking to Jardine Lloyd Thompson about professional cavers’ insurance for the Irish. GJ: The majority of the SUI renewals so far this year appear to be as “caving” members, rather than “non-caving”.

Action Log 55: GC: See FSE Report.

Action Log 56: LW: Ongoing.

## **Officers’ Reports**

### **6. Chairman’s Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

AE: There are far too many “Reports not submitted”. It makes everyone’s life much more difficult. Can we please try hard to provide something in advance of meetings?

GJ: CNCC are becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of written reports submitted prior to BCA Council meetings. CNCC, and probably other Regional Councils, appreciate the ability to review the reports so that we can comment on any contentious issues and prime our representative appropriately. Lack of these reports also implies a lack of commitment to the role and lack of respect to National Council.

AE: Has had many discussions with all sorts of people in recent weeks and NW will be putting together a document for discussion at the next meeting. AE urges people to contact him to discuss potential ideas. Ideally this would be by telephone, but e-mail is also fine. **Action 57: NW to put together a discussion document following his discussions with AE.**

Proposal: *to accept the Chairman's Report*

Prop: DW Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

## 7. Secretary's Report (*written report previously circulated*)

### Annual General Meeting:

DW: AE would prefer to move the AGM to 18<sup>th</sup> June. Would this inconvenience anyone?

GJ & NW *said they would be unable to attend.*

AE: Then the meeting should remain as 11<sup>th</sup> June, as previously agreed.

### Manual of Operations:

DW: Sees the Manual of Operations as a two-part document. The first part will outline our standard operating procedures and standing rules. The second part will be a depository for all sorts of useful documents and information for future post holders. This will be DW's main focus in the coming weeks and he intends to present a working draft of his sections to Council Members prior to the next Council Meeting for comment. Other Council Members may well need to assist with their sections following the March meeting.

GJ: Had been building a set of procedures for his role as Membership Administrator, but these are now out of date as they relate to the old system he used. Following the introduction of the "*Grand Unified Format*" he will need to update it, but is now in a position to revisit this.

DW: Will liaise with NW and GM prior to discussing this with both GJ and Mary Wilde.

LW: Always envisaged it as being a document that details our procedures, including some information currently in our Constitution, rather than containing lots of detail about everybody's day-to-day ways of working.

### Child Protection:

DJu: Did not originally step down because he wasn't willing to be Child-Protection Co-ordinator. He merely felt that it was a job better done by a younger person.

DW: Agreed that the named point of contact in the case of allegations of malpractice should remain "one or more members of the Executive" as detailed in our current Policy.

Proposal: *to accept the Secretary's Report*

Prop: LW Sec: GM *agreed unanimously*

## 8. Treasurer's Report (*written report circulated*)

### Ballot

DC: Can GJ confirm his hours in preparing for the Ballot? The figure in GJ's report seems very high.

GJ: An error. It should read 26.75 hours of tidying-up time.

DC: The cost was, therefore, a little under 50p per member.

### Internet Accounts

**Proposal:** "*The National Council confirms that the HSBC Accounts (Main, No. 1 and Training), NatWest (Subscriptions), Standard Life (Reserve) and PayPal accounts be Internet accounts. The following controls are to be observed:*

*1) No payments are to be authorised by the Treasurer alone.*

*2) Members of the Executive shall be able to view up-to-date account statements at any time.*

*3) That the maximum combined daily payment limit on each HSBC account be £3,000.*

*4) That balances above £1,000 in the Subscriptions and PayPal account are transferred to the main account.*

*5) That withdrawals from the Reserve Account can only be made into the main account.*

*6) That written instructions require two signatures."*

**Prop:** DC Sec: DW

**Proposed Amendment:** *Add item 7) Account Statements are sent to BCA's official address.*

**Prop:** NW Sec: CF *agreed unanimously*

*New amended proposal agreed unanimously*

## **PL Insurance Premium**

DJu: £31,850 includes Irish amount plus tax at 2010 levels, saving money.

NW: This is lower than some premiums in the past.

GJ: Have the FSE and UIS invoices now been paid?

DC: UIS was paid in advance several years previously and UIS need advising of this. The FSE invoices have been paid.

Proposal: *to accept the Treasurer's Report*

Prop: DW Sec: GM *agreed unanimously*

## **9. Conservation & Access Officer's Report**

DC: Had a phone call from EL.

DJu: In August 2010 a very important report was published in "Geosphere", an online US magazine. It was the result of 10 years' work and contains a lot of information on the findings in the Victoria Cave in the 1800s. The work has produced a continuous record of deposition and climatology change over the last 600,000 years. Whilst the cave, as such, is largely worked out, there are still some deposits remaining that will provide information reaching back even further when more advanced research techniques become available.

DJu has taken a lead on this, rather than EL, because it is largely a scientific matter. After much liaison with scientists and relevant bodies, DJu has expressed our concerns about the importance of the site to Robert White of the YDNPA, the owners of the site.

This said, it is felt that there is very little that can be done to conserve the cave without 24-hour human presence, or a very expensive visitor centre. The landowner will, however, deal locally with the rabbit erosion.

DJu to circulate a request to all cavers asking them to refrain from disturbing Victoria Cave further. It has also been suggested that we should liaise with the BMC, as the site is important to climbers.

GM: This is not a crag that is currently part of any of BMC's controls.

LW: Might it be counter-productive to put this on the cavers' radar.

GM: Can I suggest that local outdoor centres are informed and the respective person from local authorities are also informed.

LW: If the site is that important, why is there not a big gate?

DJu: It isn't practical, as it is a huge entrance.

DCh: Could a pathway be built to guide possible visitors away from sensitive parts?

**Action 58: GM and NW to liaise with BMC about protecting Victoria Cave.**

## **National Parks Consultation**

DC: EL reports that there will be a National Parks consultation. EL will contact the Regional C&A Officers.

DC: EL reports that Forestry Commission (FC) land is under threat from sales and EL wonders if now is a sensible time to approach the FC for an over-arching agreement.

MM: The timing in Wales is likely to be different because of devolution, but feels it would be sensible in Wales.

JC: Ideally this would be part of the legal agreements on sale.

SH: There is a whole range of experience with the FC with mines. We went through this whole exercise with the NT, but it is not clear that the result has been embedded at a local level.

GM: It may be a good idea to contact the Mountain Bikers too.

NW: If we're not careful, the FC will take any one lobbying group as one single vote. It might be better to be seen as separate bodies.

AE: The feeling of the meeting is that this is a good idea.

**Action 59: EL & DJu to take forward idea of approaching Forestry Commission about a national access agreement.**

Proposal: *to accept the Conservation & Access Officer's Report*

Prop: LW Sec: MM *agreed unanimously*

## **10. Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report**

NW: There has been no meeting since the last Council Meeting, but another meeting will be scheduled for probably late February.

### **a. Rope-Test Officer's Report** *(written report previously circulated)*

Proposal: *to accept Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report*

Prop: OC Sec: CF *agreed unanimously*

## 11. **Training Officer's Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

- GM: GM has been having discussions with Mary Wilde about how to disseminate information to Award holders and they are considering a Facebook page. GM has a couple of examples.
- DC: Facebook is excellent advertising to get people interested. The danger is that there are multiple communication channels with more places for people to look.
- JC: Facebook is all well and good, but their Terms & Conditions mean they have copyright and can retain information even if it is removed by the poster.
- GJ: Could you not consider setting up an e-mail mailing list?
- NW: The advantage of FB is that the site can interlink different groups. We should, however, probably be giving links to the BCA forum rather than posting information directly.
- DC: Who will be in charge of it?
- GM: Mary, who will only post with my agreement.
- GM: Mary has also set up a Google calendar to advertise dates relevant to Training.
- GM: Has asked T/As for BACs details to speed up payments from BCA.

### **Ireland**

- GM: Has asked for funding to go to Ireland to finalise agreements. This is the first time another country has accepted our Scheme. GM considers it very worthwhile.
- LW: There is an added complication with Ireland, in that our caves are spread across the official national borders. This parity of qualifications makes a lot of sense.

***Proposal: That GM and TP's travel expenses for a visit to Ireland be paid by BCA.***

**Prop: JP Sec: DC** *agreed unanimously*

### **Committee Structure**

- GM: In the main most people agreed with the proposed changes within the Training Committee, although ACI raised strong objections. It appeared, though, that this may have come from a few people, rather than the membership. GM queried whether DW had received a complaint about GM.
- DW: No.

### **Training Committee**

- DC: Does not really understand the remit of the Training Committee. This could make it difficult to respond to GM's letter to RCCs.
- GM: When set up the Training Committee was to represent Training, and this was originally largely for recreational cavers. Much of the professional caving work happened through BACI. This changed from around 2003 onwards when Training Committee became dominated by the professional side of caving. RCCs began to send the only person available, who was often professional. JP, SH and IW have attended recently, but this does not reflect Recreational caving as a whole.
- LW: Imagined that TC was effectively the ultimate body and all other Committees are answerable to the TC.
- GM: The two Panels are solely the providers. They don't set policy. They sometimes put forward ideas but because TC is often very small, decisions on Policy are often just GM.
- DCh: What do you think the role of BCRA should be?
- GM: Anybody who attends should be there in a pro-active role. BCRA have a huge amount to offer the Training Committee.
- JP: DCA's Training Officer is very active and brought this to DCA's attention. This was discussed at the last DCA meeting. DCA regarded it as extremely important that training for recreational cavers through clubs continued. A number of DCA member clubs have applied for and received Training Grants for Club events; the DCA Training Officer also provides training for recreational cavers using grant aid to subsidise the cost. It was suggested that there should be a note in the BCA Newsletter on the availability of grants for recreational caver training. A motion was also passed "that a BCA pot of money for recreational caver training should remain available for clubs." It was also felt that it was important to strengthen the relationship between recreational and professional cavers. Some 20 years ago PICA was set up and is a grouping of all the Peak District organisations who run centres or are freelance. PICA meets regularly and has DCA Reps on it, including the Conservation Officer. This is working very well and both sides benefit. We do not want to lose the pot of money that is available for Recreational cavers.
- SH: Nigel Atkins has traditionally done an excellent job, but it is generally not happening in the rest of the country. Attendance has tended to be very poor, even when professional cavers have been selected to represent RCCs.
- MM: In Wales we have suffered from a perception that the TC is entirely about professional caving, and it has been

impossible to fill the post. Training is much broader than SRT and training has been run on surveying. Money has come from the Assembly government on caver training.

LW: Could some money be spent on resources, such as a pack that would assist club Training Officers with club training sessions?

MD: Historically there were two distinct groups where there was often antagonism. This has now changed

#### **Other**

GM: CIC Handbook is virtually finished.

GM: The Scout Association's mines advisor has advised The Scout Association that they do not need to use inspected mines, as they do not come under AALS legislation. GM has advised that he is of a different view because they have a Duty of Care to their youngsters.

Proposal: *to accept Training Officer's Report*

Prop: JP Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

## **12. Publications & Information Report**

LW: Very little to report directly. Has so far failed to find a suitable date for a P&I meeting.

### **a. Webmaster's Report**

DC: Has been struggling with the invoicing for Web Services, but this is almost complete. DC and LW are now looking for someone with the necessary experience, who can be trusted to work on the Web Server.

DC: The British Library has asked if we would like our website to be archived. They have also asked us to recommend other significant sites. **ACTION 60: Anyone to forward sites for archiving to DC and LW.**

DC: Old NCA website remained for a long time. However the site no longer exists.

### **b. Newsletter Editor's Report**

MC: Nothing has been submitted and therefore there is no Newsletter.

DW: We have recently had an offer from someone to provide CNCC news. Maybe this could be replicated by other Regions. Cambrian and DCA also have their own newsletters, from which content could probably also be taken.

GM: Can happily provide content for a Training Page.

### **c. Handbook Editor's Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

LW: Given the Handbook is now being published following the June AGM, should we call it Handbook 2012 rather than 2011/12. This will mean we no longer seem to be out of date.

DW: An excellent idea.

Proposal: *to accept Publications & Information Officer's Report.*

Prop: JP Sec: FL *agreed unanimously*

## **13. Legal & Insurance Report**

Nothing to report that hasn't been covered elsewhere.

### **Other Reports**

## **14. Youth & Development**

### **Membership Analysis:**

JC: Presented figures that show how many years each BCA member has been a member of a club, although this is not necessarily consecutive years of membership and is based on the Club through which members initially joined BCA. There is some link with what we might expect, in that University Clubs seem to have a lot of transient membership, but other than that, there is probably not much that we can learn.

GJ: When GJ began in 2006, he started issuing new membership numbers from 7,000 onwards. We are currently at 11,424 members with the 10,000<sup>th</sup> member joining in 2010. There is clearly a heavy turnover of people joining and leaving, and it is very difficult to analyse the trends.

LW: CSCC has tried to build partnerships between mainstream caving clubs and University clubs.

MM: There tends to be a huge attrition rate in members of caving clubs in general.

DCh: Attended CHECC this year and talked about cave science issues. He was very pleased to be able to tap into it and wonders if other groups should also be talking to them.

JC: How we encourage people to continue with caving after University is the tricky aspect.

GJ: Produced a table for the AGM showing membership totals over the last few years. It showed that numbers are

growing slightly pretty much year on year.

**Outdoor Show:**

JC: The Outdoor Show is from 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>February. We are being given a stand in exchange for CJ giving a few talks. Because of the artificial cave, we need PL insurance.

NW: We may need to increase the limit of indemnity especially for the event. **Action 61: JC to liaise with NW re: PL Insurance.**

JC: Any volunteers would be greatly appreciated – free admission for helpers is available as well as a limited number of car passes.

Proposal: *to accept Youth & Development Officer's Report.*

Prop: GJ Sec: DW *agreed unanimously*

**15. Membership Administrator's Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

GJ: Apologised for the mistakes in his Report that had been highlighted earlier under the Treasurer's Report. He confirmed that the amended figures should be 26.75 hours for "cleaning" the address list and 6.25 hours chasing clubs. **(Post-Meeting note: these figures have already been amended on the attached Reports).**

EP: Thanked GJ for the quick turn around in her membership cards.

GJ: Individuals and Clubs seem to be very efficient this year. The balance between online and cheque payments is currently about 30:70.

Proposal: *to accept Membership Administrator's Report.*

Prop: LW Sec: GM *agreed unanimously*

**16. Insurance Manager's Report**

NW: Public-Liability Policy has been renewed without problems. We have been offered an extension of the current policy for another 2 years, making the current deal a 5-year one. NW's recommendation is that we should accept this.

**Proposal: that we accept the 2-year Public-Liability Insurance deal with our Underwriters.**

Prop: NW Sec: DC *agreed unanimously*

MD: To what extent is our price with the insurers dependent on membership numbers?

NW: There is no real concern at the moment. A need on our part to increase in the limit of indemnity is likely to be the reason for an increase at some point in the future, though.

NW: SUI are now part of our Scheme and the insurer has not charged us the £1,000 we were told we would have to pay.

Proposal: *to accept Insurance Manager's Report.*

Prop: GJ Sec: DCh *agreed unanimously*

**17. Radon Working Party Convenor's Report**

CF: Has liaised with BM and there is broad agreement on progressing with the Radon publication. There now needs to be a face-to-face meeting where some corrections and proof-reading take place. Following liaison with GM, DJu and LW, the publication should be ready to be presented to Council prior to publication.

NW: It may be necessary to amend the name of the HPA in the document following Government reorganisations.

IW: Will there be a simplified version of the document available for lay people? This would be very helpful.

CF: We did do a Summary Sheet as guidance for Universities which could be revamped.

Proposal: *to accept Radon Working Party Convenor's Report.*

Prop: IW Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

**18. Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report**

DC: Nothing to report.

**19. International Representative's Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

**a. FSE Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

LW: Have we paid FSE now?

DC: Yes. We received 3 invoices in quick succession as a result of a change in their accounting years.

Proposal: *to accept International Representatives' Reports*

Prop: EP Sec: JP *agreed unanimously*

**20. Media-Liaison Officer's Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

Proposal: **to accept Media-Liaison Officer's Report**

Prop: DC Sec: FL *agreed unanimously*

**21. British Caving Library Report** (*written report previously circulated*)

Proposal: **to accept British Caving Library Report**

Prop: CF Sec: LW *agreed unanimously*

**22. Any Other Business**

**a. Review of BCA's Mileage Rate**

MD: There was always an underlying principle that we should pay at 30mpg and not cover wear and tear. The current rate does that at the moment.

NW: The standard business rate at present is 40p/mile.

Proposal: **to raise the employee rate to 30p/mile with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January.**

Prop: NW Sec: DJu *agreed unanimously*

LW: We need to bear in mind that our figures are used as the basis for several other organisations' rates, such as the RCCs, Hidden Earth etc.

NW: Perhaps we should introduce the higher rate for people who do a lot of miles per year, and the normal rate for others.

LW: We, the volunteers, are in effect subsidising British Caving under the current mileage rate.

JP: DCA discussed this and the feeling was that we should always pay travel expenses so volunteers were not deterred.

MD: Were we to change our policy and pay more than just petrol, we should probably take this to the AGM.

LW: A stepped rate is very difficult and we should probably treat everyone the same.

Proposal: **to pay 25p/mile with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January.**

**Prop: SH Sec: LW**

Amendment to the Proposal: **to pay 22p/mile with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January**

**Prop: DC Sec: DW**

For: 3 Against: 18 Abstentions: 2 *amendment rejected*

*The original proposal was then voted on, as follows:*

For: 20 Against: 2 Abstentions: 1 *proposal passed*

Proposal: **to treat the post of Training Officer at the employee rate, given the considerable travel commitment**

Prop: NW Sec: GJ *passed unanimously*

**b. Policy for use of Artificial Cave**

LW: Should our policy be different for commercial organisations and member organisations?

NW: We already have a lot of interest and charging commercial organisations would imply that it can be treated badly as part of the "fee".

FL: Would a deposit be more effective?

JP: Who would cover the cost of transport? DCA's cave works on the basis of the user paying transport and giving a donation.

GM: There will be a considerable insurance cost for the trailer.

NW: Summarised the feeling of the meeting as: it should be available free of charge for member clubs, and not available for commercial activities. We should expect a deposit up-front and an acceptance that all damage will be paid for.

Users should also have their own liability insurance for use of the cave.

AE: Entre Prises Ltd is going to give us two more bits that are larger.

NW: Has investigated purchasing a trailer, and it has been decided that the second-hand route is almost as costly as a new one, once repairs have been taken into account. A double-axle 2-tonne brake trailer is likely to cost in the region of £3,500.

IW: It will be important to purchase suitable security. IW suggests a substantial wheel lock.

Proposal: **to give NW a budget of £4,000 for the purchase of a suitable trailer, including suitable security.**

**Prop: NW Sec: GM** *agreed unanimously*

**c. Honorary President**

Proposal: **to recommend to the AGM that Mick Day be made Honorary President**



**Prop: AE Sec: DW** agreed unanimously

### 23. Date, Time & Place of next meeting

The next Council Meeting will be held on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 10.30am at The Baptist Church Hall, Alvechurch

### **Action Log – January 2010**

No.	Action by ...	Details of Action
6	<b>DC</b>	Update Bank Mandates.
20	<b>LW, NW &amp; AE</b>	To set up sub committee to consider expenditure on <i>Speleology</i> .
24	<b>CM</b>	To pass info from MoD Radiological Department to CF.
29	<b>CJ</b>	To contact Gavin Newman about stock media footage of caving.
34	<b>CJ</b>	To contact organiser of “Thrill Seeker” and ask for weblink to be changed to Try Caving website.
36	<b>DW</b>	To put together a Manual of Operations
38	<b>CM</b>	To continue to liaise with CF over previous 10 years of military radon-dose data.
44	<b>JC</b>	To analyse membership data over the last few years and try to find a pattern.
50	<b>EL</b>	To prepare some further information on White Nose Syndrome to be passed to DW for the website.
52	<b>Various</b>	RCCs and anybody else with a potential interest to ask for suitable people to be on the list of “Court-Ready Technical Experts”.
54	<b>NW &amp; DJu</b>	To liaise with SUI with a view to helping them streamline their insurance situation.
56	<b>LW</b>	To put together a professional-looking flyer in advance of the next FSE Bureau meeting.

### **Jan 2011 Meeting**

57	<b>NW</b>	To put together a discussion document following discussions with AE.
58	<b>GM &amp; NW</b>	To liaise with the BMC about protecting Victoria Cave.
59	<b>EL &amp; DJu</b>	To take forward the idea about approaching the Forestry Commission about a national access agreement.
60	<b>All</b>	To forward sites for archiving to DC and LW.
61	<b>JC</b>	JC to liaise with NW re: PL Insurance.



# BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

Council Meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2011

## OFFICERS' REPORTS

### Item 6: Chairman's Report

As chairman of BCA it would seem to me that my most important job is getting the council to work as effectively as possible. A couple of council members have expressed an interest in retiring at the forthcoming AGM and they will be difficult people to replace.

Overall it would seem to me that we should be trying to make these council positions as interesting as possible with efficient meetings which are as enjoyable as possible. It is a fact of life that cavers worldwide tend not to be bureaucratic and would prefer to go caving. I am open to suggestions and will be tabulating some ideas to be discussed at the AGM. Meanwhile I will try and get to some more regional meetings. Please can people continue to let me know when these meetings are and if I can I will attend them.

A couple of people have expressed concern that I might be thinking of bringing in some suggestions without discussion. I must emphasise that will categorically not be the case. I am hoping to try and put some ideas together for the AGM and will not do anything non-democratically before then. If people have ideas or worries, please can they contact me.

I should like to thank all members of council for all their hard work. I suspect there are an awful lot of British cavers who have no idea of the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes on their behalf.

*Andy Eavis, January 2011*

### Item 7: Secretary's Report

**Annual General Meeting:** Notification of this is due to be with members by the end of January. Following the Constitutional Amendments passed last year, it is now permissible to do this on the website only. However, I feel we need to contact members more than we do at the moment. In the absence of a newsletter, I had intended to post out postcards on Friday. However, I have put this on hold until the end of next week because Andy would benefit from a change of date. This is something we need to decide absolutely today.

**Manual of Operations:** Work on this has now begun, although I regret I have been slow to get properly going. I must thank Cookie for his help in setting up a Wiki, which will provide the basis for the Manual. The advantages of this are numerous, not least of which is that sections can be written and amended directly by the appropriate people.

I intend to try to make up for my slow start in the next couple of months. It is my - I hope realistic - plan to have a draft of most of my sections of the text available for discussion at the March Council meeting. In order to stick to this plan, I will be consulting on various aspects in the next few weeks.

**Child Protection:** Following my request in the last Newsletter for assistance with Child Protection, I was surprised to have three separate offers of help and advice. I have been liaising with David Judson about a sensible way forward with this. It looks likely that responsibility for Child Protection will return to him, with the valuable input from our volunteers when necessary.

*Damian Weare, January 2011*

### Item 8: Treasurer's Report

The PL insurance premium has been paid. The 2010 round of Regional Council Funding has been completed and paid. The cost of the ballot was:

Printing Ballot	£404
Mailing	£2087 (NB inc posting Newsletter)
Glenn's Time	£388
Total:	£2879

Following the constitutional ballot and amendment of clause 10.6 I put forward the following proposal regarding the Internet accounts:

*The National Council confirms that the HSBC Accounts (Main, No 1, Training), Nat West (Subscriptions), Standard Life (Reserve) and PayPal accounts be Internet accounts. The following controls are to be observed:*

- 1. No payments are to be authorised by Treasurer alone.*
- 2. Members of the executive shall be able to view up to date accounts statements at any time.*
- 3. That the maximum combined daily payment limit on each HSBC account be £3000.*
- 4. That balances above £1000 in the Subscriptions and PayPal account are transferred to the main account.*

5. That withdrawals from the reserve account can only be made into the main account.
6. That written instructions require two signatures.

*David Cooke, January 2011*

## **Item 9: Conservation & Access Officer's Report**

No report submitted.

*Elsie Little, January 2011*

## **Item 10: Equipment & Techniques Officer's Report**

No report submitted.

*Nick Williams, January 2011*

### **a) Rope Test Officer's Report**

An approximately 27 year old 11mm rope which has been left on a pitch for 17 years has been tested and found to have survived 2 drops on average. A similarly aged rope of the same manufacture and subject to moderate use but kept in a store is also being tested. Results to date suggest on average it will survive 5 drops. A single sample of the same manufacturer but only 13 years old survived 25 drops. It is planned to publish a paper on the results later in the year (which will include results from the instrumented BPC Rope Test Rig which provides impact force data).

The BCA Rope Test Rig was taken to Hidden Earth and a reasonable number of samples were tested over the weekend. 43 other samples have been tested during the year with 4 remaining outstanding. A large quantity of used rope from ICC's expedition work was handed over for testing to provide more data on the impact of leaving rope within a cave for medium periods of time. A programme of work has been drawn up but the rope has yet to be tested.

*Bob Mehew, January 2011*

## **Item 11: Training Officer's Report**

2010 has been a busy and, at times, very difficult year with many significant changes needing to be addressed. On the positive side registrations are up for both LCMLA (219) and CIC (25).

LCMLA and CIC revalidations have proved troublesome throughout the year. We ask Panels to prebook revalidations for a twelve month period. In many cases, early in the year we had to cancel courses due to the fact that we did not have the minimum numbers to make the courses financially viable. This often meant that persons who had booked on a course six weeks before it was due to run were then in a position of their qualification going out of date, which could affect their employment. In September I made a decision that, if a course had persons booked on six weeks prior to the course date, then that course should run even without viable numbers. I have instructed panels to do the same throughout 2011.

Even with the losses made on some courses BCA still returned a profit of some £700.00. To ensure people revalidate before their due date I have removed the twelve month window following the expiry of their qualification in which they were still allowed to revalidate. Failure to revalidate on time will mean they will have to do a core skills re-assessment. These will be managed by Mary and myself with panel members being offered the re-assessments on a rota basis. The year has seen several major moves forward: the LCMLA Handbook was finished and issued on CD, the Weather Book completed with thanks to Dave Baines' and Steve Long's input, The Manchester Hole prosecution was eventually resolved with common sense winning out. This led to BCA endorsing the hydrology document produced by myself on Manchester and Goyden.

Over the past twelve months I have been in correspondence with John Sweeney from the SUI re parity and acceptance of our LCMLA qualifications in Southern Ireland and our acceptance of theirs. These negotiations are almost complete but really require myself and the chair of NCP to meet with SUI in Ireland. I seek the approval of Council for this visit. This agreement will be the first time that our qualifications at LCMLA have been accepted by another sovereign nation allowing our cave leaders to work legally in another country.

2011 will hopefully see the completion of the geology booklet and possibly the start of the booklet on vertical skills for the cave leader.

I have had very positive feedback from the last Training Committee meeting re-changes to TC and NCP with the ACI rep. being the only negative element. I understand that the chair of ACI has written a letter of complaint about that meeting and possibly my comments, although I have not seen a copy of the letter. I have written to the secretaries of the Regional Councils and other Constituent Bodies (letter attached) asking really what they would like the role of TC to be and whether they still want representation on the body.

I have been dealing with an issue regarding the Scout Association and the advice they have received about the use of uninspected

mines. It appears they have been told, as they do not come under the control of AALS, then they are quite at liberty to go where they wish. I have pointed out that as the majority of time they are dealing with children (up to 18 ) then they must apply good practice and be aware of their 'duty of care'. I have further pointed out that in the event of an accident in an uninspected mine, they almost certainly would be held criminally liable under 'duty of care 'by HSE.

I would like to raise the issue of travel expenses from two sides, one the expenses paid to Mary @22p per mile, and those available to the Training Officer who undoubtedly is required to do more mileage than any other officer. The present rates no longer even cover the cost of fuel.

Finally I accept that some bodies do not like my management style which some see as being blunt and autocratic. Many are adverse to change but any scheme needs to be tweaked and developed when necessary. We offer professional qualifications which have to be managed by a set of rules which I feel I apply fairly, the same for all. If Council feels that my continuation as Training Officer will be detrimental to their relationship with some Constituent Bodies, I am quite willing to step down and let someone else take on the role.

*Graham Mollard, January 2011*

## **Item 12: Publication & Information Officer's Report**

No report submitted.

*Les Williams, January 2011*

### **a) Webmaster's Report**

No report submitted.

*Les Williams, January 2011*

### **b) Newsletter Editor's Report**

No report submitted.

*Mike Clayton, January 2011*

### **c) Handbook Editor's Report**

The online version of the current Handbook is now on version 3 with updates taking place in November and January. Work will begin before the next Council Meeting on the 2011-12 version which will be published as soon as possible following on from the AGM. As usual, any ideas for improving the publication will be greatly appreciated.

*Damian Weare, January 2011*

## **Item 13: Legal & Insurance Officer's Report**

No report submitted.

*David Judson, January 2011*

## **Item 14: Youth & Development Officer's Report**

No report submitted.

*James Collings, January 2011*

## **Item 15: Membership Administrator's Report**

### **BCA Membership to December 31st 2010**

- DIMs : 415 (caving) and 43 (non-caving)
- (BCRA DIMs : 230, BCRA Honorary: 7)
- CIM Plus: 21
- CIMs: 4120 (caving) and 1174 (non-caving)
- Clubs: 154
- Associates: 9
- Access: 5

**New Clubs:** The Leicestershire Scouts Caving Unit have supplied the correct paperwork and payment to become a member club of BCA.

**2011 Renewal Process:** This started on 1<sup>st</sup> December when all Group members were emailed their 2011 renewal pack. For clubs, this meant a cut of their 2010 membership spreadsheet, together with the associated application forms. This year I have included a

separate "How To Complete The CIM Proforma" pdf, partly in an attempt to make completing the CIM proforma as painless as possible, but also to enforce the requirement to complete the address fields correctly. DIM renewal letters were posted in mid December (thanks to David Gibson for arranging this).

As of today (12<sup>th</sup> January 2011), I can report that 167 DIMs have been processed (a surprising number of DIM's renewed on-line between Christmas and the New Year - resulting in two manic card printing sessions), 24 clubs (representing 234 CIMs and 3 CIM plus members) have been processed, with a further 15 clubs (525 CIMs) part processed (card printing file has been built, cards will be printed and posted by the end of this week).

The first January CD took 8 days to traverse the Royal Mail system between Great Hucklow and Sandbach. The second January CD (posted on 10<sup>th</sup> January) has just arrived (containing a further 63 DIMs)

**Action 46: GJ to include information about returns from the Constitutional Ballot:**

- 26.75 hours (over 15 sessions) were spent "cleaning" the CIM address list
- 4918 CIMs were balloted
- 97 were "returned to sender"
- a further 6.25 hours were spent chasing clubs to correct those returned members' addresses

*Glenn Jones, January 2011*

### **Item 16: Insurance Manager's Report**

No report submitted.

*Nick Williams, January 2011*

### **Item 17: Convenor of the Radon Working Party's Report**

No report submitted.

*Clark Friend, January 2011*

### **Item 18: Cave Registry Co-ordinator's Report**

No report submitted.

*David Cooke, January 2011*

### **Item 19: International Representative's Report**

Unfortunately due to various factors I was unable to attend the International Showcaves Association meeting in Slovakia in October. It was a great shame I couldn't make it as there were a number of important items that were left unfinished. I believe if I had been there it might have helped. As ever there is an ongoing rivalry between showcaves and sport caver explorers.

Within the UIS gradually things are being made more professional and the amount of communication via Skype and email is becoming extraordinary. The next major meeting I will be attending is in the Czech Republic in April, inspecting the venue for the next International Congress in 2013. Other meetings I may attend is the showcave meeting in Australia. Unfortunately this clashes with the European Federation Bureau meeting in Bulgaria, so I cannot go to both.

In September there is a Middle East speleological group meeting in Lebanon, the European meeting, in conjunction with the Spanish national meeting, which both coincide with Hidden Earth. In spite of making some attempts, it would appear that all 3 conferences are all the same weekend in September.

Finally the European Federation are thinking of being involved with an internet-based speleological TV channel. They would like BCA to be involved but they so far have not come up with any information in English. When they do I will share it with you.

*Andy Eavis, January 2011*

### **Item 19a: FSE Report**

The last meeting of the FSE took place in Casola, Valsenio, Italy on 30th October 2010. The following items were covered;

1. **Update on member countries and non-European countries + fee payment:** There are currently 25 full members of the FSE. There are a total of 47 independent countries who are eligible to join. Five countries had not paid up, they are Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, UK & Netherlands. Russia has recently been canvassed for membership but there are an array of provisional organisations that make unity difficult. The Czech Republic are still refusing membership and Austria will be approached imminently.

2. **European Cave Protection Commission:** Regarding White Nose Syndrome (WNS) a link is now established between FSE & UIS. Work continues on promoting the European Cave Day. Two blog options have been utilised for this promotion and FSE will consider possibilities of financing blogs. The cave day will be late September early October this year
3. **FSE Women's Commission:** The idea was floated of a women's commission and generally agreed.
4. **European Environmental Commission (EEB):** ([www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org)) Jean Claude Thies of Luxembourg has been nominated to represent FSE on this body.
5. **UIS Code of Ethics:** Briefly discussed and situation in Krubera which is currently problematic. Teams in conflict exploring this system. The C of E could be used to resolve issues.
6. **The European petition for cave protection** has been signed by 22 FSE member countries. The petition has been given to Janez Potocnik (EU Environment Commissioner), Ladislav Miko's secretary (Director of the DGE) and to the German Ministry of Environment. We are awaiting feedback but the idea of organizing a conference around protection issues is to be pursued by ECPC
7. **FSE Cave Rescue Commission:** It was proposed that a cave rescue commission should be established. The aim would be to raise awareness collectively at a European level.
8. **FSE Open Air Competitions:** Discussion about application of European rules and decisions. Marbella Euro Speleo Forum to host competition.
9. **International Caving Expeditions database:** Work continues to develop this information.
10. **Euro Speleo Forums:** 2011, 2011 & 2012 confirmed. The Marbella Forum is likely to clash with Hidden Earth weekend. I will pursue this with the Spanish. Decision on European Congress to be discussed at next bureau meeting. BCA is preparing a flyer for UK nomination.
11. **Euro Speleo Protection Label:** Decision that all labels will be in English, with a summary in French and the accompanying national language

Next Bureau meeting - 14th May 2011 in Bulgaria

*Ged Campion, January 2011*

## **Item 20: Media-Liaison Officer's Report**

- Nigel Atkins and myself are confirmed to be presenting at Outdoor and Leisure show
- I have finally got round to updating my section of the BCA Website. There is a general explanation of BCA aimed at journalists and a broad explanation of caving.
- BCA image library idea launched on UK Caving – and linked to from BCA website. The simple concept is to make my life easier when members of the press ask me for a photo. I'm hoping to point them at the image library and then they can make whatever arrangements they want with the photographer.
- A few phone calls as per usual including BBC and Vue Cinemas (though I've been unable to return their call)
- Up and coming – Sanctum 3d the new James Cameron block buster is due for release in February. This features caving and cave diving so we are sure to get some press from this. Youth and Development should benefit particularly as we are attending the Outdoor and Leisure show at the end of Feb.

*Chris Jewell, January 2011*

## **Item 21: British Caving Library Report**

**Re-organisation Continues:** The re-organisation of the Library begun on 20<sup>th</sup> June is still our priority and the re-cataloguing of periodicals, surveys, maps, etc. continues. All UK periodicals are now at Glutton; the Glutton and Matlock sets are currently being "merged" on the shelves and our next job will be to check through each set to extract duplicates and produce an accurate list of exactly what is held.

A number of batches of the foreign periodicals have been transferred to Glutton and have already been catalogued; the work continues steadily. Some sets have still to be transferred but the Matlock site is effectively no longer in use, although the Librarian can collect specific items from there and take them to Glutton for use by enquirers if needed.

New periodicals are being added to the stock all the time and these are gradually being incorporated into the catalogue. The exchange of BCRA/BCA publications with periodicals from foreign caving organisations has been reviewed and we are in the final stages of checking contact details to re-start the system, continuing the tradition of having a comprehensive collection of caving literature from around the world.

Cataloguing of books is up to date and continues as new items come into the Library and are shelved. We expect to find large numbers of duplicate publications, both books and periodicals, and the Library Steering Group intends to set out a Library policy on disposals and duplicates which will encompass such unwanted material, sales of more valuable items, the need to keep some duplicate copies (e.g. all BCRA, CRG and BSA items), digitization, etc.

**Library Usage:** The Librarian's Facebook page for the Library continues to attract followers and a Christmas Quiz has been won by none other than Les Williams. We hope to increase the number of UK publications coming into the Library and would encourage Clubs

producing their own publications to donate a copy of each item produced to the Library. We continue to receive donations to the Library from older cavers who are looking for a suitable place to deposit their collections of caving literature, papers and photos.

**Finances:** Now we have completed this year's library accounts we shall re-visit the Library Business Plan 2010 to 2014 to compare our progress and update the Plan in the light of that progress.

*Jenny Potts, January 2011*

## Appendix 1: Letter to RCCs & Constituent Bodies

**Please reply to:**

Graham Mollard - BCA Training Officer:  
The Old Chapel, Selby Road,  
Camblesforth, Selby,  
N Yorks, YO8 8HX  
E-mail: gnmminiatures@btinternet.com  
Tel: 01757 611485  
24/05/2011

Dear

**Re: BCA Training Committee**

During the last five years regional councils and other constituent bodies, have been poorly represented on British Caving Association Training Committee Meetings, with only Derbyshire being represented on a regular basis. One reason for this may be that the majority of business relates to professional qualifications rather than regional training issues. However, I believe that regional clubs will have training issues that could and should be brought to the attention of the BCA and the Training Committee is currently the best forum for this purpose.

I would like to know if wish to retain your seat on the Training Committee and if so how we might make it more effective for you. One possibility would be to hold one meeting per year where the focus is on regional council issues.

I would welcome your input and request that you respond within four weeks of the date on this letter.

Yours sincerely



Graham Mollard

BCA Training Officer